

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 to 8. (canceled)

Claim 9. (currently amended) An apparatus for hot-dip galvanizing comprising:

a plating vessel which holds a molten metal;

a plating tank which is located at an upper portion of the plating vessel and ~~which conducts~~ wherein the hot-dip galvanizing is conducted by immersing immersion of a steel strip thereinto, the plating tank having a first side wall, a bottom wall and a second side wall;

a dross removing tank which is located at a lower portion of the plating vessel and which removes dross from the molten metal, the plating vessel being divided into the plating tank and the dross removing tank by the first side wall, the bottom wall and the second side wall;

a ~~transfer means~~ mechanical pump which transfers a molten metal bath in the plating tank to the dross removing tank; and
an opening positioned on the plating tank to recycle the molten metal bath from the dross removing tank to the plating tank.

Claim 10. (canceled)

Claim 11. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the ~~transfer means is a~~ mechanical pump[[,]] and has a suction opening ~~of the mechanical pump~~ to suck the molten metal which is positioned at a bottom center portion of the plating tank.

Claim 12. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a dissolving means to dissolve a solid phase metal, which is used for plating, in the dross removing tank.

Claim 13. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the opening is positioned so ~~as~~ that a supernatant bath after ~~removed~~ removal of the dross in the dross removing tank ~~to recycle~~ is recycled to the plating tank.

Claim 14. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the ~~plating tank has a~~ second side wall ~~which~~ is located at an exit side of the steel strip and ~~which~~ has a height lower than the surface level of the molten metal bath, and the molten metal bath is recycled from the dross removing tank to the plating tank through the second side wall.

Claim 15. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein
the plating tank and the dross removing tank satisfy the ~~relation~~ relationship of $W1 \leq 10^3$ and $W1 \leq W2$, wherein W1 is the capacity of the plating tank, and W2 is the capacity of the dross removing tank; and

the mechanical pump is able to transfer the molten metal bath at a flow rate in a range of from 1 to 10 m³/hour.

Claim 16. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the ~~plating tank has~~ first side ~~walls~~ wall, the second side wall and ~~a~~ the bottom wall~~[[,]]~~ ~~and these walls~~ are allotted so ~~as~~ that the distances between the steel strip and the side walls of the plating tank and between the steel strip and the bottom wall of the plating tank are in a range of from 200 to 500 mm.

Claim 17. (original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the plating tank has a pipe to fix the bottom portion, through which pipe the draining is conducted.

Claims 18 to 25. (canceled)

Claim 26. (currently amended) An apparatus for hot-dip galvanizing, comprising:

a plating tank which holds a molten metal;

a separation wall located in the plating tank to divide the plating tank into a plating zone where a steel strip is subjected to hot-dip plating, and a dross removing zone where dross in the molten metal bath is removed;

the dross removing zone comprising a first dross removing zone and a second dross removing zone;

a first mechanical pump which transfers the molten metal bath from the plating zone to the first dross removing zone;

a second mechanical pump which transfers the molten metal bath from the plating zone to the second dross removing zone;

a first weir located to the separation wall to transfer a supernatant bath of the molten metal bath after ~~removed~~ removal of the dross in the first dross removing zone to the plating zone; and

a second weir located to the separation plate to transfer a supernatant bath of the molten metal bath after ~~removed~~ removal of the dross in the second dross removing zone to the plating zone.

Claims 27 to 34. (canceled)

Claim 35. (currently amended) An apparatus for hot-dip galvanizing, comprising:

a snout through which a steel strip travels;

a plating vessel which holds a molten metal, ~~which~~ said plating vessel ~~has~~ having a sink roll to guide the steel strip ~~traveled~~ which travels through the snout;

a plating zone to conduct hot-dip galvanizing by ~~immersing~~ immersion of the steel strip thereinto and a dross removing zone to remove dross from a molten metal bath, ~~which zones are~~ said.

plating zone and said dross removing zone being formed by locating a shielding member to shield a gap formed between a lower portion of the snout beneath the steel strip and an upper portion of a side wall of the plating tank; and

a mechanical pump to discharge the molten metal bath from the plating zone to the dross removing zone and also to recycle the molten metal bath from the dross removing zone to the plating zone.

Claim 36. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 35, wherein the plating tank is located so ~~as the~~ that an upper end of the plating tank ~~to become~~ is higher than the level of a rotary shaft of the sink roll.

Claim 37. (currently amended) An apparatus for hot-dip galvanizing; comprising:

a plating bath tank which holds a hot-dip galvanizing bath containing aluminum at ~~contents~~ a content of 0.05 wt.% or more;

a snout through which a steel strip immersed in the plating bath tank travels;

a plating tank ~~which conducts~~ wherein plating is conducted
and a dross removing tank ~~which separates~~ wherein dross is
separated by sedimenting sedimentation of the dross, both of
~~which tanks~~ the plating tank and the dross removing tank are
formed by locating a separation wall in the plating bath tank;

a snout cleaning device ~~to connect~~ which connects the
plating tank and the dross removing tank at directly below the
snout and at a part of exit of the steel strip so ~~as~~ that a
connecting passage ~~to have~~ has a hydraulic diameter of 0.1 meter
or more, the hydraulic diameter being defined by a formula given
below, and so ~~as~~ that the bath levels of ~~both tanks to the~~
plating tank and the dross removing tank become equal to each
other, the snout cleaning device having a pump to suck the
plating bath in the snout ~~by a pump~~ from both longitudinal edges
of the snout to discharge the sucked bath to a portion where ~~no~~
the steel strip travels does not travel, thus cleaning ~~the~~ a
plating bath surface in the snout, and to circulate the plating
bath between the plating tank and the dross removing tank;
wherein the hydraulic diameter is defined as follows:

~~Hydraulic~~ hydraulic diameter = $\{(\text{Cross } \underline{\text{cross}}$ sectional area of
flow passage) / (~~Wet~~ wet length of flow passage) $\} \times 4$.

Claim 38. (original) The apparatus of claim 37, wherein the capacity of the plating tank is 10 m³ or less and the capacity of the dross removing tank is 10 m³ or more.

Claims 39 to 50. (canceled)